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Shawanokasic honored at Sturgeon Feast & Celebration Powwow

Charlotte Caldwell
Menominee Nation News

Many distinguished visitors, community members, dancers, and even some international students attended this year's Sturgeon Feast and Celebration Pow-wow which took place on April 19, 2003, in Neopit, Wisconsin. Nama'o Kewahmakat Piataeh Maec Micehswan (Sturgeon, they're coming home big feast) was organized by the Menominee Historic Preservation Office and was a huge success for the Menominee Nation.

Dancers entered the arena to the sound of the Junior Dead Grass Society singing the grand entry song, led by head dancers Dana Warrington and Jennifer Gauthier. Joey Awonohopay as the Master of Ceremonies did a wonderful job of keeping the agenda moving along.

Ms. Lillian Nelson delivered the traditional opening prayer for the festivities. Ms. Lillian is also the elder working with the language trainees at Historic Preservation. Menominee Tribal Vice-Chairman, Gary Besaw, was on hand to give a traditional Menominee welcome to the people on behalf of the Menominee Tribal Legislature.

The Royal Canadian Army was present and participated as part of the Color Guard along with the Veterans of the Menominee Nation.

Intertribal dancing provided a time for all people to participate, including the Chicago-Menominee group who travelled specifically to be there. The Odawa Tribe is revitalizing their traditional sturgeon feast and came to participate, as well as learn from the Menominee. Terri Wescott, language trainee at Historic Preservation, said, "It was really good to have such a great turn out. So many people were there to share this day with us. It felt good."

The highlight of the day was the



Submitted Photo

This years Sturgeon Feast honoree was Leslie Shawanokasic, who was recognized for her dedication to keeping alive the tradition of ricing to students at Menominee High as well as teaching other traditional customs. Pictured above Jennifer Gauthier, Leslie Shawanokasic, Elvira Penass (Leslie's mother), Bob Shawanokasic (Leslie's husband) and Dave Oshkosh congratulating Leslie on her honors. Inset picture is Head Dancer Dana Warrington, Dave Grignon, Martin Monk Pyawasay, and Aaron Weso performing the Fish dance.



naming ceremony and honoring of one of our Menominee Indian High School teachers - Mrs. Leslie "Easter" Shawanokasic. Dave "Nahwahquaw" Grignon, Director of Menominee Historic Preservation, gave Easter her Menominee name, "Manominukiw" which means Wild Rice Woman in Menominee. Easter has worked with students for many years to preserve the tradition of wild rice harvesting for the Menominee People. Dave then presented her with a Pendleton blanket. This blanket, from the storyteller series, was embroidered with a message - "To a

great Menominee woman who had the dedication and commitment to keep our wild ricing traditions alive."

The Menominee Language trainees, in the traditional way of showing honor, presented Easter with a beaded Eagle Feather inside a ribbon-applied feather case with a sturgeon on the front.

"I was shocked. Everyone knew this was happening except me," stated Easter. She was amazed at the amount of recognition given to her. Jetta Coon presented Easter with a plaque for her love and dedication to the students on behalf of the

Menominee Indian School Board.

Samantha Dowd presented her with a plaque with a bronze eagle on top on behalf of the staff and students at Menominee Indian High School. A beautiful hand-painted picture of a Menominee woman winnowing rice painted by "Jim Black" Webster was also given to Easter.

Lisa Waukau, Menominee Tribal Legislator, was on hand to read the Proclamation from the Legislature recognizing

See Sturgeon Feast pg.7

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Inside this issue

Legislative Corner	2	Community	6-9
Comments	3	Mother's Day Spread	10
Language	3	Happy Ads	11
Health	4	Vital Statistics	12
Wisdom Keeper	5	Education	12-19